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In the Margins: Dance Studies, Feminist Theories and the Public Performance of Identity

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By

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To the women in my life-

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Abstract

During the last decade of the twentieth century, there was a rush of ideologies and theories, discussed and applied to dance, shifting traditional dance history into dance studies. Of particular interest in this paper, is the strong relationship with dance and feminist theories. The historical and social context of feminism and dance scholarship became and still is a topic of politics, representation and meaning. Female bodies playing a key role in dance evokes questions of how feminist theories help performers and non-performers alike better understand gender and gender roles in performances.

Within the topic of dance scholarship, this paper will address what a feminist is, where and how feminist theories and the study of dance first met, as well as reference specific works and choreographers that showcase the connection between the two. Specific attention will be paid to four different women who are considered literary, dance and/or feminist icons, including Isadora Duncan, Zelda Fitzgerald, Patti Smith and Yvonne Rainer. The writer will focus on these four women and the public performance of feminist identities as it relates to each of them individually, as well as their writing- biographies, autobiographies, memoirs, etc. In addition, it will seek to answer what a feminist dance looks like, according to the writer, and how this idea can change and modify according to the audience members, or viewers. Lastly, it will work to question whether or not there has been a shift in feminist theories as they relate to dance and the power of the relationship today.

The author Julia Zdrojewski was born in Buffalo, New York on . She attended The State University of New York at Geneseo from 2006-2010 and received a Bachelor of Arts in English in 2010. She also attended The State University of New York at Buffalo from 2010-2012 and received of Masters of Education degree in Literacy. She began work toward a Master of Fine Arts in Dance at The College at Brockport, State University of New York in the Fall of 2011.

Chapter One

"How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?" That was the beginning of a joke that was told to me on a date recently with a guy named Joe. I had just finished explaining my academic research; essentially what I had been reading and writing about for the past three years. I also had just finished my beer. "How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?" That was the only response I received. I fancy myself a bit of a jokester, and anytime I take a BuzzFeed quiz, I usually click on "Sense of Humor" when I'm asked what my most preferable trait in a mate would be, so I'll admit I was pretty eager to hear the punch line.[1]

"How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?"

Perhaps here, some context would be helpful. I am a female. I am middle-class. I am white. I am twenty-six years old, and I am a feminist.

When I was younger, I did not have the language available to call myself a feminist. The word had yet to enter my vocabulary or arena of understanding, but looking back on specific times or events in my life, I can see that I always was one. In the second grade, I stood up and told my teacher, Mrs. Lipome, that I was going to be the first female president of the United States in the middle of a lesson about the White House. Literally stood up. I cannot stress enough here that Mrs. Lipome was not a teacher to mess with. Even in the second grade, she meant business. She looked at me for a second without even the hint of a smile,

[1] BuzzFeed is an online website, featuring global news and pop culture goodness. Often times the website features personality quizzes, where results can be shared via social media.

and I could feel my best friend Elizabeth pulling on my sock for me to sit back down on the rug. "Miss Zdrojewski, if you interrupt me again you can go visit the main office," she said before pausing and adding, for what I can only assume was dramatic effect, "And if you ever do decide to become the first female president of the United States, you can count on my vote." I was thrilled. Her spelling tests were close to impossible and everyone took her so seriously, that with her endoresment I genuinely felt like I had the job in the bag.

Years later, we had to dress up like our favorite historical figures from the United States, and I dressed up like Susan B. Anthony by wearing a long black dress and taping a white paper doily to my chest. Almost the entire class, boys and girls alike, dressed like George Washington. Nobody guessed correctly whom I was when I proudly stated, "I played an important part in the making of the 19th Amendment," which was really kind of a bummer, because I remember thinking my costume basically gave it away.

By high school I was helping out at bake sales for the Third Wave Club, discussing various Ani DiFranco lyrics and their relevance in my life, and in college I once pushed a boy so hard that we both fell on the ground after he yelled in my face that I was a "fucking cunt" for not wanting to go home with him that night (I feel the need to mention here that I do not condone violence, and Greg felt so bad after the incident that he showed up at my dorm the next day in tears).[2]

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[2] Third Wave Club was an afterschool club at my high school that discussed various feminist issues and the equality of women worldwide. Ani DiFranco is a singer-songwriter, born in Buffalo, New York.

I don't remember the first time I heard the word feminist. I don't remember the first time I identified as one. I wish I had a cool story where I repeated, "I am a feminist," over and over again in the mirror like the writer Caitlin Moran describes in her book *How To Be a Women*, perhaps with some Beyoncé playing in the background, or while wearing my Hillary Clinton t-shirt, but I don't.[3] All I have are a series of stories that led me to where I am currently in my life, in this moment, on this date, with this joke being thrown my way.

"How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?"

"I don't know. How many?"

"Does it matter? Feminists never change things anyway."[4]

My Feminism, My Academia

While I don't remember the first time I identified as a feminist, I can remember the first time I started writing about my feminism in an academic sense. I was in graduate school, and working towards obtaining my Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance in Performance and Choreography. I started dancing early in life, but didn't start thinking critically about dance until my early twenties. I became interested in the way women were being portrayed on stage, and even more intrigued in how they were being perceived by an audience. The physical representation of gender through costumes and choreography was a point of significance carried in every dance performance I saw. Arguments that I

[3] Beyoncé is a worldwide popular singer and performer, while Hillary Clinton is a former Secretary of State, Senator from New York and First Lady.
[4] I have made the choreographic choice to write a in a voice that aligns itself with the 21st century feminist writers whom I study.

could not yet fully articulate began being the subject of articles that I read in graduate school, and my academic interests began to narrow in scope.

I was in a course called "Dance History and Development" where we read an article written by dance scholar Ann Cooper Albright titled, "The Tanagra Effect: Wrapping the Modern Body in the Folds of Ancient Greece." The article referenced the influence that Ancient Greece had on female artists who lived their life in a modern way, including, but not limited to, Isadora Duncan. The idea of a modern lifestyle being influenced by the culture and customs of Ancient Greece caused me to take pause for a moment. Duncan took off her corset, essentially freeing the female body, but this seemed at odds with the culture of Ancient Greece where women were not free to walk around in public without a male guardian.[5] This specific curiosity caused me to head to the school library, and allowed for my initial introduction to dance scholar Ann Daly.

Daly's book, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America*, often discussed the lifestyle choices of Duncan within the context of women's roles in the first quarter of the twentieth century; even specifically pointing out that, "Isadora did not join in any organized efforts, choosing instead to be a force of one..."[6] I found the relationship between Duncan, a women who had opinions about marriage, motherhood and clothing that differed from popular opinion, and the time in which she lived to be a fascinating point of friction. Biographies about women

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[5] Bella Vivante, "Women in Ancient Greece," in Women's Roles in Ancient Civilizations: A Reference Guide, 199, ed. Bella Vivante. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999).
[6] Ann Daly, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Bloomington & Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 163.

who had to navigate their life choices within the limited options of their time became a new, personal literary obsession, with one figure in particular standing out- Zelda Fitzgerald.

No lie, I once spent two full days reading Amazon reviews to find the best biography about Alabama's own Zelda Sayre Fitzgerald, before eventually deciding upon Nancy Milford's *Zelda.*[7] I loved every word. I went to sleep and woke up with the used copy of the book daily. I made a dance piece inspired by my summer love affair with the text. It was called *Scott's Wife,* and consisted of five female dancers who each represented a different role that Fitzgerald would have had in her life- painter, dancer, writer, socialite and wife/mother.[8]

My obsession with Zelda Fitzgerald exploded in such a way that I tried to pause and consider the root. I believe that I was feeling trapped inside an expected trajectory of my own, and reading about the free nature of Fitzgerald felt like a cathartic release. I read her words, stared at her paintings, and imagined how her body must have ached after her countless hours of studying ballet every single day. I appreciated the agency she had in her life. She seemed to make choices that could be traced back to nobody but herself, with a life that was more complex that any of us could ever really know. She crafted her public image without apologies, and was often considered the first American flapper, which was, "... a new and necessary phase in feminism. The vote had been a

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[7] Amazon.com allows for the buying and selling of goods online and often features customer reviews for buyers to read.

[8] This piece, titled *Scott's Wife,* was selected through adjudication to be performed in the DANCE/Strasser concert at The College at Brockport in the Fall of 2012.

public milestone on the journey towards emancipation, but just as important was the unfettering of women's private emotions."[9]

My exploration of biographies focused on female artists, including Isadora Duncan's own autobiography, *My Life*, published in 1927, led to other works both by and about historical female figures. It was a pattern that I was not even cognizant of until after I read *The Bell Jar* by poet and novelist Sylvia Plath, whose depressive memoir coincidentally led to a few weeks of grey weather and very little sun. Soon after, I began reading the works, looking at the performances and studying the lives of artists like Patti Smith and Yvonne Rainer. I study both literary and dance icons, because as I will discuss in Chapter Four, the act of writing specifically about ones life acts as a strong supplement to the studying of public personae. These strong females in a male-dominated world were fascinating to me as a reader and observer. None of these women came up in a time where they had Twitter feeds to fill with like-minded individuals who had their backs (#dismantlethepatriarchy).[10] Through social media, immediate communities can be made with the hopeful intention of supporting one another. The internet isn't the only place though where one can go to find a friend, even prior to Mark Zuckerberg and the apps that have followed, women (and men) have had places to go to discuss their ideas on the treatment of women including the National Women's Party formed by suffragettes like Alice Paul and Lucy Burns in the beginning of the twentieth

[9] Judith Mackrell, *Flappers: Six Women of a Dangerous Generation* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2013), 8.
[10] Twitter is a popular social media site, where users are able to share thoughts/ connect with others, but are limited to 140 characters per message or tweet.

century, the National Organization for Women (NOW) formed in 1966 and *Ms. Magazine* founded by activist Gloria Steinam in 1971.[11]

In my research, I consider Duncan, Fitzgerald, Smith and Rainer all to be feminists, not because they always labeled themselves as such, but because they all created and performed what I would argue is a feminist identity by claiming choices and options in their life as a given right. The performance aspect can be aligned to gender theorist Judith Butler's views on performativity as written about in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* and while I know that feminism is not dependent upon gender or the performance of gender, my research is specific to the fact that I am studying four literary and dance icons who happened to be women at various points in American history.

Coming to Terms

As my reading and writing about females whom I felt embodied feminist values continued, my daily conversations around my own feminism continued as well. It wasn't that long ago that I was spending a Friday night drinking wine and eating Nutella with my best friend when she asked if I was going to stop shaving my legs, as a result of my feminist identity. What I wanted to tell her was that it was winter, that we lived in Buffalo, and that if she thought I had actually been shaving my legs these past few months she was insane, but instead, "Oh please, I'm not that kind of feminist," just came pouring out of my mouth.

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[11] Mark Zuckerberg is the founder of Facebook, a popular social media site that allows people from all over the world to connect with one another.

Our conversation swiftly focused back onto our plans for the evening, and how Nutella is the best thing to ever be invented, but my mind kept drifting back to that moment.[12] What did I mean when I said I was "not that kind of feminist" and if that was true, then exactly what kind of feminist was I? I had been writing about women like Isadora Duncan and Zelda Fitzgerald for some time now, I was knee deep in Patti Smith's *Just Kids*, I was binge watching *Scandal* on Netflix, I was supportive of both Olivia AND Mellie- did that mean nothing?[13] All of a sudden it felt as though I couldn't defend my own ideals or thoughts. I couldn't form a comprehensive sentence about what kind of feminist I was because I didn't know what kind of feminist I was. Were there different kinds? Did that mean there was a correct or an incorrect kind? Were there clubs? Was I going to need to pay dues? Doesn't this hypothetical feminist club know that I just spent the last few dollars I had on Nutella?

The irony of thinking about the feminist identities of these literary and dance figures, while not being able to intelligently discuss my own wasn't lost on me. When it came to examining the choreography of my own identity, I wasn't able to articulate my own solo performance. I thought maybe I wasn't a feminist after all. Maybe my love for Ani DiFranco didn't stem from her saying, "Every woman has the right to become herself."[14] Perhaps instead, I just had great taste

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[12] Nutella = Hazelnut Spread = Heaven.
[13] *Scandal* is a popular television drama that can be streamed through Netflix. Olivia Pope and Mellie Grant are women in a relationship with the same man. Audience viewers often set the women against one another, or classify themselves into "teams" to show support (Team Olivia or Team Mellie).
[14] Ani DiFranco Quotes. (n.d.). *BrainyQuote*. Retrieved June 4, 2014, from http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/a/ani_difranco.html

in music... but then I put my iTunes on shuffle and the first song that came up was Carly Rae Jepsen's *Call Me Maybe* and I learned that must not be true.[15]

At this time, I also gained an understanding of the privilege that I experienced on a daily basis. I was reading books where women seemed to be facing not only forms of sexism, but also classism and racism in a heteronormative structure. My story does not consist of all of these. I'm writing this sentence on my laptop. I'm working toward my second Masters degree. Yeah, I have loans, but much less than some of my peers because my parents helped pay for my undergrad degree. Before college, I went to a private, all-female high school, which at the time was somewhat close to an all-white, all-female high school, and while I credit my school experience with helping form my political opinions, it is still important that I be aware of the privilege I experienced. I began to wonder if my experiences and beliefs had to be mutually exclusive. It felt as though my participation in society was not valid enough for me to wear my feminist hat out in the open.

Researching Feminism

In a fit of questioning and crisis, I turned to Google, began searching what books were most commonly being used in Women and Gender Studies courses, and decided to start educating myself. It's not that I didn't believe my personal experiences were valid or accountable in the progression of my political beliefs,

[15] The ironically awful "summer song" of 2011 that still seems to be stuck in everyone's head. Sung by Carly Rae Jepson, the song spent nine consecutive weeks at #1 on the *Billboard Hot 100*.

but I found myself hungry for background information, for policy- even for statistics when it came to the status of women in the world. Jessica Valenti's name repeatedly showed up everywhere I looked. I appreciated that she spoke to contemporary American policy, and it wasn't long before *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Woman's Guide to Why Feminism Matters* showed up on my porch.

With Valenti, I found my feminist voice. I learned specifics when it came to pay inequality, I gained a better understanding of what rape culture looked like, I developed a deeper sensitivity to slut shaming, and I read about the reality of the invisibility for lesbians and women of color in our culture, and then how that reality can specifically be seen in the first wave of feminism. I didn't experience all of these things firsthand, but I became more aware of the lived experiences of others. That knowledge shifted my personal perspective and strengthened my feminist lens.

Through my reading, I gained confidence in claiming my identity through the recognition that one size doesn't fit all; that I didn't need to force myself on one side or the other of this imaginary feminist line. I no longer believe there is such a thing as a bad feminist or an authentic feminist. People can still claim their identity as feminist, while living either conservative or more liberal lifestyles. Valenti said it best when she pointed out how she was, "...so fucking sick and tired of people telling how to be an appropriate feminist- or what a feminist looks like. In the same way it's stupid to say that all feminists are hairy

man-haters, it's stupid to say that women who rock heels and mascara aren't hardcore enough or are acquiescing to sexism."[16]

Valenti, along with other writers like Kira Cochrane, Caitlin Moran and speaker Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, whom I will discuss throughout my writing, has given me information through which I can decide what my feminism looks like in 2014; for instance, sometimes I'm watching Lena Dunham's *GIRLS*; most times I'm listening to my girl Fiona Apple.[17] This understanding, coupled with my knowledge of dance studies and criticism, has given me a particular lens through which to view some of the women I have been reading about, explicitly with regard to Isadora Duncan, Zelda Fitzgerald, Yvonne Rainer and Patti Smith.

Feminism and Public Performance

Through my writing, I focus on these four women specifically, and how their public images can be viewed as performances of feminist identities. In an effort to do so, I foreground their public personae and lives in society by shifting their artistic production to the background. Studying a person's art as a way to infer what his/her political beliefs must be, can at times feel unrelated or wrongly judgmental. I should also make the disclaimer that I'm going to keep my research grounded to the United States. No disrespect to the EU or anything, but I'm mostly interested in discussing these women within the context of the waves

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[16] Jessica Valenti, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Women's Guide to Why Feminism Matters* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2007), 174.
[17] Lena Dunham is the writer and creator of HBO's *GIRLS*, a show that is frequently discussed using a feminist perspective. Fiona Apple is a current singer-songwriter.

of feminism in America, and how these periods coincided with shifts in American modern dance.

Prior to my writing on the performance of feminist identities, I work to lay down a foundation of my understanding on the relationship that exists between dance studies and feminist theories. Specifically, I take the time to address two main questions: How did dance begin to shift into the academic arena of dance studies and scholarship/ how did feminism influence this shift; and also as a result, how are the two actually connected? I had originally assumed that the relationship between feminist and dance scholars had always been a positive one- not true. The interrelation of the two is complex and complicated. American modern dance can be viewed as a reflection of the principles and values of the three feminist waves or an art form that reiterated traditional gender roles for women. A lot of my writing will be dependent upon studying the positives and negatives of this relationship- how dance throughout history has both received and rejected feminist ideals, and in return how feminism has both helped and hindered an appreciation for dance. Once this foundation has been laid, I will be able to bring that information into my writing on public feminist identities and performance.

I didn't have the vocabulary to call myself a feminist when I was younger, I didn't always have the confidence to publicly proclaim my individual feminism just a few years ago, and I, for sure, didn't have the movie-worthy comeback that I would have loved to have had when I was asked, "How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?" It doesn't matter. I may not have always had the

language, or the courage, or the comments that align with my perception of feminism, but I was one. I was one in second grade, and I am one now. My studies and concentration in feminist theories and dance studies give me a unique perspective when it comes to looking at past and present literary and dance figures, and I use this perspective to make my case for the public performance of feminist identities, as exemplified by four individual women. I then discuss how these identities currently operate in present day society. And then I will tweet a smart and witty comeback to that joke. And it will be awesome.

Chapter Two

In my writing, I focus on how the public identities of four individuals, Isadora Duncan, Zelda Fitzgerald, Patti Smith and Yvonne Rainer, can be viewed as performances of feminist identities. To make my argument, I first work to lay the groundwork of the relationships that exists between feminist theories and dance studies. My interest and concentration of the partnership between the two gives me a perspective form which to make my argument. The politics involved in both contemporary dance and feminist theories come attached with notions and ideas, and I'd like to discuss how these two first met, and examine how that relationship transformed from one of stridency to complexity, using the works and words of various scholars.[18]

Specifically, this chapter aims to argue that dance studies used feminist theories as a way to discuss the representations of women on the stage during the last quarter of the twentieth century. This partnership then becomes more convoluted with time, mirroring the complicated relationship often times associated with contemporary feminists looking back at the history and politics present in the three waves of feminism. I begin looking at the intersection that occurred between feminist theories and dance studies by studying the works of scholars such as Susan Foster, Janet Wolff and Ann Daly. Each writer offers a new insight into my research on this topic, including the connectedness, but also separate identities of these two points of interest. This includes the idea of

[18] My writing voice will shift in chapter two and three to better reflect the style of scholars I will be referencing and discussing to prove my thesis.

corporeality, as well as the emotional and physical embodiment or agency that dancers feel while performing movement. In addition, there is an arduous conversation that occurs when studying dance and feminist theories that includes the layering of misogyny and patriarchy, particularly in classical ballet. I then analyze the choreography of Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer, only as it relates to the research of these dance scholars. Although my primary interest is in the public identities of these artists, I first establish that perspective through an investigation of the representation of women as discussed in academic scholarship. After laying that foundation, I examine how the complexities present in the relationship between feminist theories and dance studies determine the layered connections when looking at the three waves of feminism.

Moving Bodies and their Cultural Value

Dance scholar Susan Foster writers about these specific connections in her article, *Choreographies of Gender*. Specifically, Foster focuses on the ways choreography complicates the dichotomy that exists between verbal and corporeal thought, claiming that both create context equally, with corporeal thought being defined by Foster as a form of generating meaning using the physical body. Foster expands on this idea by also writing about performance, using philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler as a supplemental source. Butler gives weight to Foster's argument with her work on the values assigned to our physical bodies and how those values influence culture. Foster writes that, "Choreography presents a structuring of deep and enduring cultural values that

replicates similar sets of values elaborated in other cultural practices, whereas performance emphasizes the idiosyncratic interpretations of those values."[19] Foster also claims that through performance, a person, or in this case- a dancer, could resist a given role, such as gender.[20]

If I am a performer, but choose to move in a way that does not perfectly align with my sex, instead making the decision to perform my identity in a way that is democratic, and equally aligned with everyone, is that not feminist choreography?[21] I use Foster to see how dance studies have pulled from feminist theories as a way to critically discuss the representation of the body, or most commonly the female body.

Later in her writing, Foster also writes that, "Although an extensive literature has developed in feminist studies addressing the sexual status of the female body, the body continues to be used as a metaphor for the sexual or the erotic as if it could achieve no other cultural significance than as the site or sign of sexuality."[22] Foster not only discusses the use of the body as a metaphor for sexuality, but dance as a metaphor for freedom by letting the body take on new values and express these ideas with genuine possibility. She also brings about how often the connection between the body, the dance and the practices that created these results goes wrongly unnoticed or is misinterpreted, stating that, "Both dance and dance studies, however, stand as proof of the body's capacity to

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[19] Susan Foster, "Choreographies of Gender" in *Signs*, Volume 24, Number 1 (Autumn 1998), 5.
[20] Gender is defined as the state of being masculine or feminine.
[21] Sex is defined as the state of being male of female.
[22] Susan Foster, "Choreographies of Gender" in *Signs*, Volume 24, Number 1 (Autumn 1998), 19.

generate, represent and participate in much more than sexual desire."[23] With feminist values in mind, dance scholars were able to argue that the body should not be seen as just an object to bring about lust, but as a mental and physical practice, as well as a legitimate profession, fully requiring the world to take serious notice.

In her 1997 article, dance scholar Janet Wolff uses feminism as a way to discuss the cultural politics of the body. *Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics* by Wolff discuss the potential problems of using the body, particularly the female body, when it comes to promoting feminism because, "It's preexisting meanings, as sex object, as object of the male gaze, can always prevail and reappropriate the body, despite the intentions of the woman herself."[24] Essentially, Wolff argues that despite the best intentions of the performer, the intentions of the audience or viewer must also be taken into account, and sometimes those will not be in alignment with one another. While this is obviously problematic, she does go on later in her writing to claim that a feminist view of a female body in motion is not altogether impossible. Wolff views the female body as a historical site of marginalization, which is exactly why she claims it should be used as, "a priviledge site of political intervention."[25] With Wolff, I have come to the conclusion that with the intersection of feminist theories and dance studies, a person can view a moving female body as a site of social construction and cultural analysis. The way a performance is viewed is not

[23] Ibid, 20.
[24] Janet Wolff, "Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics," in *Meaning in Motion* (Duke University Press, 1997), 82.
[25] Ibid.

set in stone; interpretation is dependent upon who the audience member is, where they come from and what their cultural values are. In addition, anytime there are bodies around, particularly female, the ideas of how culture values or objectifies these bodies must be taken into account. Using Wolff, I focus on Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer, and the cultural impact of their work, before moving on to their public images alongside Zelda Fitzgerald and Patti Smith.

Gender Roles and Classical Ballet

In her article, *The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers* (1987), scholar and critic Ann Daly looks at ballet through a feminist lens and finds multiple reasons why ballet could be considered misogynistic in nature. Daly begins her arguments by stating that, "the ballerina is a cultural icon of femininity."[26] Putting the title of "icon" on the female ballerina presents real consequences for dancers, as it forces them, and also the women in attendance, to face an ideal and artificial presentation of what it means to be feminine. Seeing the ballerina as an icon sets unrealistic standards for women, causing Daly to write that ballet offers, "a powerful but regressive model in a social milieu where women are struggling to claim their own voices."[27] Continuing with Daly's argument is the idea that often the females participating in ballet, specifically those from the Romantic era are portrayed as a fairies or supernatural beings. With this in mind, Daly states that women were not even

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[26] Ann Daly, "The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers," *The Drama Review*, *TDR:* Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 1987), 16.
[27] Ibid, 9.

represented on the stage because they were constantly being portrayed as a type of, "lightweight creature on pointe."[28]

Grounding ballerinas in these idealized and fictional scenes creates an environment in which women are left without bodily agency. While there are ballets named after the women who have starring roles (*La Sylphide, Giselle*), top billing is not interchangeable with actual power. The women in these ballets are often physically manipulated by the men, receive ramifications of actions decided upon by male characters, and are positioned in a way that leaves them subject to the male gaze.[29] The partnership between male and female dancers in ballet, where the women are manipulated and supported by the males onstage, perpetuates traditional gender roles for audience members. The man is seen as the physically stronger, steadier and more assertive of the two, while the woman is set up to be physically vulnerable, flightier and passive, needing the help of the man to finish movement successfully. The male dancers are given the roles of the one who acts, who makes the decisions, while the female dancers are given the roles of the one who is acted upon, who must deal with the realities of decisions made for her and is subject to the stare of the male.

The role of the male gaze is not only seen in the Romantic era, but also in the work of choreographer George Balanchine. Born in 1904, Balanchine is credited with co-founding the New York City Ballet, and remained its balletmaster for thirty-five years. Popularly thought of by the dance world as a

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[28] Ibid, 17.

[29] See for example, the third theme from New York City Ballet's *The Four Temperaments* (1946), which Daly analyses in her article "The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers."

prolific choreographer, it was Balanchine himself who stated that, "Maybe women come to watch men dance, but I'm a man. [...] The woman's function is to fascinate men."[30] This assertion sets up the fact that men typically choreograph ballets and therefore the women are portrayed through the straight man's point of view, welcoming the male gaze through both content and physical action. As Daly states, "No matter what the specific steps, no matter when the choreographic style, the interaction structure, pointe work, and movement style of classical ballet portrays women as objects of male desire rather than as agents of their own desire."[31]Daly is in agreement here with Wolff and the idea that female bodies, particularly when performing on stage, can be read in a variety of ways that often have little to do with the agency the female dancer feels. The audience and male dancers have power in how the female body is portrayed or viewed, leaving the female body to be seen as a powerless object.

It would seem through readings of Daly, Wolff and Foster that feminism and dance studies were experiencing a fray in their relationship. Adding to the complexity of this affiliation would be the fact that later on in the mid to late-90s, many scholars and critics, including Ann Daly herself decided to engage in a two-sided discussion, rather than a one-sided argument that offers a more complex study of the relationship between classical ballet and feminist theories. While reflecting on her first article, Daly writes in *Feminist Theory across the Millennial Divide* that, "Once liberating, theory has become stifling (hence, the creative and

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[30] Flora Lewis, "To Balanchine Dance is Woman- and His Love," *The New York Times*, 6 October: 45, 84.
[31] Ann Daly, "The Balanchine Woman: Of Hummingbirds and Channel Swimmers," *The Drama Review, TDR:* Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 1987), 17.

intellectual energy invested in experimental writing and hyper-subjectivity). The very shorthand itself- "theory"- is a noun rather than a verb, an unmovable object rather than the irresistible force that it should be."[32] Various issues started coming in to play. For instance, the emotional embodiment that the dancers felt while performing movement became a subject of study, as scholars realized that discussing dance should include the feelings of the dancers themselves. These issues helped scholars realize that styles of dance and the perceptions of society, particularly when related to women and feminist theories, could not fit perfectly into a single box.

The Choreography of Isadora Duncan and Yvonne Rainer

As mentioned previously, prior to the birth of early American modern dance in the 1920s and '30s, most of professional dance performances were ballets choreographed by men. Vaudeville and burlesque shows were also being produced at this time, but are outside the scope of this research. Modern dance, and its choreographers were able to challenge this notion with women performing work that was either self-choreographed or created by other women.

Individuals such as Isadora Duncan, along with Loie Fuller, Martha Graham and Ruth St. Denis, any of whom I could have written about, emerged as revolutionaries against the patriarchal system of ballet, and literally created new movement vocabularies to express individual beliefs about art and society.

[32] Ann Daly, "Trends in Dance Scholarship: Feminist Theory Across the Millennial Divide," in *Dance Research Journal,* Vol. 32, No. 1 (Summer 2000), 40.

Isadora Duncan mostly danced alone for her audiences, presenting herself as an independent woman not reliant on others. The costumes worn by Duncan can also be seen as an example of the relationship between feminist theories and dance studies as discussed by scholars. Duncan chose to costume herself in loose fabrics that showed the body in its true form. Focusing on allowing the body to be seen with its authentic shape, Duncan dismissed the idea of wearing corsets; the typical fashion for women at the time. Corsets skewed the shape of the woman to create an hourglass figure that was viewed as more ideal for females. This stands out because it was her intention to show the natural form of the body rather than a perception of what it means to be feminine.

Dance scholar Ann Cooper Albright refers to this style of dress and its effect on a person wearing these clothes as "The Tanagra Effect." Albright writes that, "Although modeled on ancient costumes, the Tanagra style of dress most often symbolized a modern woman, one whose lifestyle literally incorporated choice (about career, leisure activities, dress and family) with a mobility unheard of twenty years earlier."[33]

Similar to the birth of American modern dance, and the changes that it brought to society, postmodern dance was formed in the 1960s and also generated conversations about the social norms of the time. A figure who was experiencing these changes in dance and dance scholarship at this time, as influenced by feminist standards, was choreographer and dancer Yvonne Rainer.

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[33] Ann Cooper Albright, "The Tanagra Effect: Wrapping the Modern Body in the Folds of Ancient Greece" in *The Ancient Dancer in the Modern World: Responses to Greek and Roman Dance* (USA: Oxford University Press, 2010), 60.

My selection of Rainer came from an interest in reading her autobiography *Feelings are Facts*, and I write this with the understanding that I could have chosen from a wide variety of female dance artists and scholars of this time.

Rainer was one of the organizers of the Judson Dance Theatre; an informal gathering of dancers who experimented with movement that those participating did not feel belonged within the limitations and boundaries of the modern dance world, creating what would be known today as postmodern dance. As a dancer and choreographer, Rainer often focused on making work that spoke to the idea of expectations, whether societal or expectations about art. Rainer's most famous works is titled *Trio A*- the first part of a larger piece entitled *The Mind is a Muscle*. The work itself consists of a long phrase that was initially danced by three separate soloists including Steve Paxton, David Gorman and Yvonne Rainer herself. The piece is aligned with the body not being objectified, but rather used a physical and mental practice in a few different ways. In the piece, Rainer works to create a dance, which explores repetition, phrasing and the circulation of energy. Right away, one can begin to see how the body was being used as an intellectual and physical instrument. Rainer herself analyzes the role of the body in the piece stating, "What is seen is a control that seems geared to the *actual* time it takes the *actual* weight of the body to go through prescribed motions, rather than an adherence to an imposed ordering of time."[34] In addition, Rainer also works to end the objectification of the body in

[34] Yvonne Rainer, "A Quasi Survey of Some 'Minimalist' Tendencies in the Quantitatively Minimal Dance Activity Midst the Plethora, or an Analysis of *Trio A*," in *The Twentieth Century Performance Reader* (1996), 295.

this specific dance by, "never permitting the performers to confront the audience. Either the gaze was averted or the head was engaged in movement. The desired effect was a work-like rather than exhibition-like presentation."[35]

As a result, Rainer's work seems to embody the feminist principles of studying the body without objectification, which helped dance studies be part of academic discourses. With this in mind, Rainer can be considered revolutionary in the way she fought against the objectification of the female body in the arts.

In her essay on feminism and corporeality in dance, dance scholar Janet Wolff in her essay on feminism and corporeality in dance states that, "dance can only be subversive when it questions and exposes the construction of the body in culture."[36] Through studying *Trio A* and Rainer, one can see the effort that was put in to change the way that the body is looked at through the art of dance. Effectively, one can see that the body was not meant to be admired merely as a form of beauty, but as a way to experience thoughtful explorations about movement in time and space.

Complexities of Dance Studies and Feminist Theories

Throughout Rainer's time as a dancer and choreographer, dance studies used feminist theories as a way to explore the representation of women on the stage. This understanding grew in complexities as time went on and people began looking at history with a new perspective. While it may seem that early

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Janet Wolff. "Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader,* (1st ed. London: Routledge, 2003), 137.

American modern dance gladly took on the values of the first and second wave of feminism, there are also ways to look at history that change the dynamics of this relationship. An example of the complexity and potential contradictory nature of the use of feminist theories in dance studies can be seen specifically during early American Modern Dance and the 1920s and 30s. For instance, while one can claim that Isadora Duncan broke boundaries in the world of traditional dance by creating work on her own body, writers such as Janet Wolff claim that the subject of the dance, for instance its, "commitment to women's stories and lives," actually weaken the charge against the status quo by compartmentalizing all women into a singular group (Woman) who are interested in nature and other elements that are considered to be more feminine by default.[37] This can also be reflected in the way that contemporary feminists look at the first wave of feminism.

While the first wave was incredibly important, allowing many women to be given legal rights in this country, it is important to not overlook its flaws. To state that the first wave equated to suffrage and end the conversation, is to dismiss the voices and wants of many women who were ignored at the time. One of the issues that feminist scholars have with the first wave, and even feminism today is that it all too often leaves out women of lower socio-economic status and color, according to writers like Mariame Kaba, Andrea Smith, Lori Adelman, and Roxane Gay.[38] The leaders in granting women's suffrage were white women

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[37] Ibid, 134.

[38] Mariame Kaba, Andrea Smith, Lori Adelman, and Roxane Gay, "Where Twitter and Feminism Meet." *The Nation*. (The Nation: 17 Apr. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.)

of middle to upper class status, and when they spoke, they set the narrative, telling stories that reflected their own struggles and grouping all women into a single story that did not reflect the diversity of the time.

Those who spoke to how early modern dance resisted the ideals of feminist theories spoke up for postmodern dance and the way that it reflected the themes present in the second wave, producing what scholar Susan Manning calls an "authentic feminism."[39] Dance writer Elizabeth Dempster and previously mentioned Janet Wolff believe that the values of postmodern dance accurately align themselves with the values of the second wave of feminism, due to dancers' ability to perform without objectification. However, the second wave or feminism, similar to the first, also has instances of exclusion. For example, organizations that began during this time like the National Organization for Women (NOW), "distanced themselves from lesbian issues in the late 1960s," due to their fear of being, "stereotyped as 'man-haters'."[40] Inclusion has proven to be a problem for feminism in the past, and continues to be seen as one today, although in Chapter Four, I discuss how new waves of technology and social media are helping to dismantle pillars of power and ensure that all voices are heard equally.

As Susan Foster states, "... dance studies, like feminist studies, has engaged in the balancing act between assimilation into general semiotic and

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[39] Susan Manning. "The Female Dancer and the Male Gaze," in *Meaning in Motion* (Duke University Press, 1997), 158.
[40] Jessica Valenti, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Women's Guide to Why Feminism Matters* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2007), 171.

cultural theory and maintenance of a distinctive identity."[41] By a "distinctive identity," Foster is reiterating that dance studies and feminist theories are not interchangeable, although their relationship remains important in each of their histories. The context of the times in which the waves of feminism occurred, as well as the time when dance scholars started using feminist theories plays a role in the way both of these notions developed. It is with the knowledge of this relationship and all of its complexities that I claim public identities can be choreographed and read through a contemporary feminist lens, specific to my research.

[41] Susan Foster, "Choreographies of Gender" in *Signs,* Volume 24, Number 1 (Autumn 1998), 20.

Chapter Three

Let's start this chapter by defining feminism, as demonstrated by the popular feminist thinkers and writers of today. Founder and former editor-in-chief of the feminist website *Jezebel*, Anna Holmes, describes the term as, "...not about strength or weakness," saying instead that, "It is about inequality, inequity, and leveling the playing field, opening up opportunities to women of all ages, races, and economic classes."[42] Writer and actress Lena Dunham simply states it as, "...having all the rights that men have."[43] Caitlin Moran, author of *How To Be A Woman,* ends up defining the word by claiming that a full-on restoration is in order:

> When statistics come in saying that only 29% of American women would describe themselves as feminist — and only 42% of British women — I used to think, "What do you think feminism IS, ladies? What part of 'liberation for women' is not for you? Is it freedom to vote? The right not to be owned by the man you marry? The campaign for equal pay? 'Vogue' by Madonna? Jeans? Did all that good shit GET ON YOUR NERVES? Or were you just DRUNK AT THE TIME OF THE SURVEY?[44]

With my own understanding of feminism, supported by the ideas of other contemporary feminist thinkers as cited above, I am able to write about the public performance of four individual women's identities and how I can view those performances as inherently feminist. My use of contemporary feminist thinkers, or my peers, is aimed to discuss feminism in a way that is accessible to everyone, regardless of prior knowledge about theory or level of academic

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[42] "Why More Young Women Are Calling Themselves Feminists, According to The Book of Jezebel Author Anna Holmes." *Glamour*. (N.p., n.d. Web. 27 Apr. 2014.)
[43] Ibid.
[44] Caitlin Moran, *How To Be a Woman*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2012), 75.

education. My understanding of the word "performance" and "performativity" will be based on the writings of scholar and philosopher Judith Butler, as she is a leader in gender, feminist and literary theories. In her article, "Performance Acts and Gender Constitution," Butler writes about the action of performing ones gender as expected by established societal norms, and the possible ramifications that one can experience by performing this gender in a way that goes against the norm. In using Butler, I establish my argument that Isadora Duncan and Zelda Fitzgerald performed, as well as Patti Smith and Yvonne Rainer who are still performing female identities in their time. I construct my argument by using specific examples from their personal lives that were all lived publicly (Smith and Rainer will be discussed in the context of the second wave of feminism and postmodern dance respectively).

These instances showcase how this group of women went against societal expectations, as it relates to the performance of gender normativity. By rejecting a set of values given to women by set societal standards, and instead demanding the same rights afforded to men, Duncan, Fitzgerald, Smith and Rainer were not only publicly performing female identities, but also choreographing these identities in a way that allows them to be seen as feminists through my own present day perspective.

Judith Butler and the Performance of Identity

Prior to placing a feminist identity on these four women, I first must discuss how they identify with a given gender. Once I have discussed how that

gender rejected given expectations that are placed on females by society, I will be able to place the identity of feminist on Duncan, Fitzgerald, Smith and Rainer. As Judith Butler states, "It would be wrong to think that the discussion of 'identity' ought to proceed prior to a discussion of gender identity for the simple reasons that 'persons' only become intelligible through becoming gendered in conformity with recognizable standards of gender intelligibility."[45] Essentially, Butler is stating that society creates an identity based on a person's gender, requiring that the conversation and explanation of what gender is and means must occur prior to the evaluation of an individual's identity.

Judith Butler describes a gendered identity as something that is, "instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts.*"[46] Her writing often discusses the difference between gender and sex. Essentially, each person is born with a sex, but performs a gender. I was born with female sex organs, but I choose to perform womanhood through specific movements or "acts" that align themselves with a female gender. I style my hair, walk a specific way, wear a certain style of clothing that all read as female-gendered to a societal audience. These alignments come from a deeply ingrained sense of normativity in said society. These norms are not truth or fact, but expectations that culture has placed on different sexes to create the binary of complimentary genders. As Butler goes on to say, these acts are then, "renewed, revised, and consolidated

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[45] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York: Routledge, 1990), 16

[46] Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" in Theatre Journal, Vol. 40, No. 4 (Dec. 1988), 519. Italics are the author's own.

through time," creating the false image that sex and gender are one in the same.[47]

Butler discusses the idea of identifying with a given gender as something that is personal to the individual, stating that, "My situation does not cease to be mine just because it is the situation of someone else, and my acts, individual as they are, nevertheless reproduce the situation of my gender, and do that in various ways."[48] Since a gender is individual to the person through a series of acts, it seems that Butler would argue a person can choose a gender, but where people would get into trouble with society is if they choose to perform their gender in a way that does not perfectly align with societal norms.

Society supports people acting, or performing their gender, in a way that is supportive of established binaries on the bodies of people. When individuals choreograph their identity, but so do in a way that does not support a set binary, for instance by identifying as women who rejects expectations, society can feel as though its norms have been threatened. Butler comments on this, writing that, "As a corporeal field of cultural play, gender is a basically innovative affair, although it is quite clear that there are strict punishments for contesting the script by performing out of turn or through unwarranted improvisations."[49] The performance related words that Butler chooses act as a reinforcement of the feminist choreography I will discuss.

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[47] Ibid, 523.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 531.

Four individual women who improvised their public image in a way that went against societal norms were Duncan, Fitzgerald, Smith and Rainer. My writing makes a case for each of them that showcases how her rejection of gendered expectations can be read as feminist. By reading their memoirs, biographies and/or autobiographies, I acted as co-choreographer in creating their feminist performances. My choice to study the written words of these women, and not their creative work is deliberate in this chapter. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the physical act of writing can be viewed as dance, and allows for a different form of personal expressions. Viewing writing as a different kind of performance allows me to consider the lives of these women off the stage as well. These dance and literary icons grew up either during the first or second waves of feminism, which I believe will also create a unique context for the ways they chose to publicly live their lives.

Isadora Duncan: A Change of Dress, Not a Change of Name

Isadora Duncan was born in the year 1877 and died in 1927. During this range of time, the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) was formed in the effort to obtain voting rights for women in the United States, and the 19th Amendment granting suffrage was passed in Congress in 1919. The United States was experiencing a surge in energy with women demanding equal rights during the formative years of Duncan's life, and she seemed to meet that intense energy head-on, through her dancing and her writing.

Duncan's writing heavily focused on the ancient, classical cultures of the past, with a specific focus on ancient Greece. Art and literature from ancient Greece were considered to be "classics" meaning that there was an air of dignity and importance that they were surrounded by. Dance, during the turn of the twentieth century, differed from art and literature in that it had, for a much longer period of time, been considered only social, and not scholarly. This was until the end of the nineteenth century as dance scholar Ann Daly, who often wrote about Duncan's fascination with ancient Greece, states, "From the 1860s to the turn of the century, and especially around 1890, dancing from a legitimate topic of consideration in respected journal and books."[50] Isadora Duncan, an avid reader, wanted to write about dance, and did, but in an effort for these writings to be taken seriously by the theoretical minds of her time, she included the writing of and her opinions about ancient Greece. By including this culture in her theories about dance, Duncan elevated her level of discourse to surrounding eyes and ears significantly. Through this incorporation, Duncan was able to help bring a new respect to dance, with Daly argued that Duncan was aware of how this focus would positively affect her world of art. Daly writes that as, "A selective learner, Duncan did not need to master the depth and breadth and nuances of an aesthetic theory or scientific principles; she needed only to discover that which helped articulate and legitimize her dancing."[51] This points

[50] Ann Daly, "Isadora Duncan's Dance Theory," in Dance Research Journal, Volume 26, Number 2 (Autumn, 1994), 24.
[51] Ann Daly, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Bloomington & Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 29.

to Duncan's strategic awareness of what was necessary to raise the awareness of dance in academia.

In her writing, Duncan also took the opportunity of having her voice to represent the collective "woman" while writing "The Dancer of the Future."[52] In her writing, as in her movement, Duncan tried to allow for the individual presence to be known and for the objectification and search for sexuality (when its sole purpose is to engage the male gaze, as discussed in Chapter Two) to be taken off of the female body. In trying to engage in a discussion about a gendered body not being objectified, but rather an equal part of the human race, Duncan was taking the female dancer off of the stage and into everyday nature, allowing the body to be in its "natural" state of living and beauty- an inspiration that Duncan drew directly from the ancient Greeks.

Duncan continued to write and speak about the everyday rights of women in multiple ways, penning in her autobiography, *My Life*, that, "... I would live to fight against marriage and for the emancipation of women and for the right for every woman to have a child or children as it pleased her, and to uphold her right and her virtue."[53] Duncan's views on marriage also can be seen in her refusal to change her last name to match that of her husband. Her initial desire to back away from anything legal that would change her name, and therefore her identity can be traced back to her inspiration from ancient Greece. Duncan wanted to be known as an individual, not as someone's property who could be

[52] Isadora Duncan, in Sheldon Cheney, ed., "The Dance of the Future" in *The Art of the Dance* (1928, repr., 1969).

[53] Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 17.

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[52] Isadora Duncan, in Sheldon Cheney, ed., "The Dance of the Future" in *The Art of the Dance* (1928, repr., 1969).

[53] Isadora Duncan, *My Life* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), 17.

objectified. By enforcing the idea of her as an individual person and not a piece of property, Duncan was ensuring that she was an equal part of the human race, and therefore contributing to the harmonious elements of nature.

The elements of nature were a large inspiration in the personal life of Isadora Duncan, but when nature and Duncan are discussed, it is imperative that the word be placed in context. "Nature was Duncan's metaphorical shorthand for a loose package of aesthetic and social ideas: nudity, childhood, the idyllic past, flowing lines, health, nobility, ease, freedom, simplicity, order and harmony."[54] Since the respect for and desire to return to nature seemed to be one of Duncan's gains from her experience with Greece and the ancient Greek culture, one can see how this also affected her interest in clothing. The social normality when it came to clothing featured a corset and Duncan refused to morph her body in order to fit into this unnatural shape. As dance writer and critic Judith Mackrell states, "... The freedom to wear comfortable clothes was almost as crucial a right as universal suffrage. No woman could claim effective equality with a man while her organs were being slowly crushed by whalebone corsets, and her movements impeded by bustles and petticoats that added over a stone to her body weight."[55] As a result, Duncan looked to the Graces (performers for the Gods), goddesses and statues of ancient Greece for inspiration, choosing instead to indulge in draping, loose fabrics that showed the body in its true form.

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[54] Ann Daly, *Done into Dance: Isadora Duncan in America* (Bloomington & Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1995), 89.
[55] Judith Mackrell, *Flappers: Six Women of a Dangerous Generation* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2013), 8.

Duncan continually refused to adhere to the social norms at the turn of the twentieth century. Focusing on her own individuality and living out the theories that Butler famously writes about today, Duncan was sure to step out of bounds when it came to gendered expectations she was not comfortable, or did not politically agree with. Her progressive ideas about society, as well as her ability to write about her art and have her voice clearly be heard, allow her to be viewed as a feminist in her fight for equality and individualism.

Zelda Fitzgerald and the Refusal to be Boring

Zelda Fitzgerald was born twenty-three years after Isadora Duncan, but the two had a lot in common; each living with a passion for dance, writing and insisting on being recognized as the strong-minded females they were. When asked to describe herself as a young child, Fitzgerald once recalled, "When I was a little girl I had great confidence in myself, even to the extent of walking by myself against life as it was then. I did not have a single feeling of inferiority, or shyness, or doubt, and no moral principles."[56] Growing up, she was often left to entertain herself with siblings being much older than she was. As a result, she seemed to indulge in behavior that would be considered anti-norm for the time, writing in her journal, "I ride boys' motorcycles, chew gum, smoke in public, dance cheek to cheek, drink corn liquor and gin. I was the first to bob my hair

[56] Nancy Milford, *Zelda: A Biography*. (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2011), 8.

and I sneak out at midnight to swim in the moonlight with boys at Catoma Creek and then show up at breakfast as though nothing had happened."[57]

Women during this time, particularly in the deep South, were, "expected to be submissive, if not passive," and Zelda Fitzgerald seemed to consistently be reacting against those societal expectations with one peer stating, "There were two kind of girls, those who would ride with you in your automobile at night and the nice girls who wouldn't. But Zelda didn't seem to give a damn."[58]

My understanding Fitzgerald's feminism comes from these sources. Her desire to live her life in a way that pleased mostly her, speaks to the ideals of the feminist movement which allow for an individuals wants and needs to be heard, independent of gender. Zelda Fitzgerald's ability to create an image for herself that could be considered feminist in nature continued into her marriage with F. Scott Fitzgerald, but a change in surname did not keep the new Zelda Fitzgerald from creating a life that existed outside of southern belle boundaries. With her life in the public eye, she led a generation of American women to take on the identity of flappers. The flappers can be considered a movement which has since been applauded by artists and writers for its ability to let women distance themselves from the roles they had been conditioned to play and instead welcome the, "inescapable inner compulsion to be individuals in their own

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[57] Heather Tally, "Zelda Wasn't 'Crazy': How What You Don't Know About Fitzgerald Tells Us Something About 'Crazy' Women, Then and Now." *The Huffington Post.* (TheHuffingtonPost.com, 20 May 2013. Web. 25 Apr. 2014.)
[58] Nancy Milford, *Zelda: A Biography.* (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2011), 21 & 17.

right."[59] World War I had ended, and women were continuing in the long fight for equality. A flapper represented a woman in the midst of that fight, perhaps not politically, but certainly one would argue in society, due to their demand to live their lives as they best saw fit. By no longer feeling the need to adhere to societal structures and roles of the past, individuals like Zelda Fitzgerald were able to focus on their own, unique futures.

Fitzgerald's future consisted of trying to make a name and a career for herself through writing, painting and passion for the art of ballet that soon became a painful obsession. It was never lost on Fitzgerald that creating an artful future for herself, one in which she called the shots, prevented her from falling back into what she believed was a boring life lived by all "the little women," back in Alabama.[60] Living life the way she wanted, creating work for herself that she was engaged in and rejecting the societal roles for women at the time allowed Fitzgerald to choreograph her life as a public image that existed outside of expected norms. It is with her ability to be liberated from the limited possibilities of her time that allow me to view Fitzgerald as a feminist; a women who fought for her own equality through her everyday actions in the public eye.

[59] Joshua Zeitz, *Flapper*. (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), 112.
[60] Judith Mackrell, *Flappers: Six Women of a Dangerous Generation* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2013), 9.

Patti Smith and My Case for Feminism

Patti Smith does not call herself a feminist, I know.[61] The goal of my writing is not to echo the words and sentiments of these women, but as a self-proclaimed contemporary feminist, to claim that I view their public identities in a specific way, and it is through this viewing that I can make my case. Patti Smith may not view herself as a feminist, claiming instead that her only mission was and is to "...create, without apology, from a stance beyond gender or social definition..." which by definition may be a feminist act, and that is fine, but I am still going to write about her as one through my own perspective.[62]

Born in 1946, Smith came to age during the second wave of feminism, which writer Jessica Valenti describes in her book *Full Frontal Feminism* as a time when women were beginning to react against, "... the '50s –housewife model set before them, which laid out a life that pretty much entailed getting excited only about ovens and kids and bringing your man a drink when he got home from work. Woohoo!"[63] Smith herself had to react against this model set before her when it came to choosing her career path. Working her way through college, Smith wrote in her memoir *Just Kids* that, "My father was concerned that I was not attractive enough to find a husband and thought that the teaching

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[61] Trigger Alert! (n.d.). *: Patti Smith on Feminism.* Retrieved May 20, 2014, from http://triggeralert.blogspot.com/2013/01/patti-smith-on-feminism.html
[62] "Smith and Feminism/Gender." *338 American Literature since 1865Spring 2012.* (N.p., n.d. Web. 26 Apr. 2014.)
[63] Jessica Valenti, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Women's Guide to Why Feminism Matters* (Seal Press, 2007), 170.

profession would afford me security," until she decided that the life of an artist was what she truly craved.[64]

Smith's feminism comes in her ability to forge herself a path where there had not been one before. Admitting to coming from a family that was not necessarily pro-artist, Smith wrote that deciding on the creative lifestyle left her at times feeling, "very much alone."[65] Like her father wanted, or as Valenti discussed, the expectations for women were to become either a housewife early on, or to choose from a limited list of socially acceptable careers, like a schoolteacher. Smith knew that teaching was not for her, that mothering the child she conceived at young age was not for her, instead choosing to give the child up for adoption, and that life in Pennsylvania was not for her either, eventually moving to New York City.[66]

While in New York, Smith explored her creative interests of writing and painting, and eventually in the 1970s began to explore vocal performance and singing her own written material. In the stories of Smith and her subsequent successes, it never seems as though she fought for rights dependent upon her gender. Instead, Smith fought for her rights dependent upon her status as a human being, and belief that all human beings should be treated equally. Rising to success during the second wave of feminism, Smith embodies more of the openness present in the third wave of feminism. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, the third wave of feminism still fought for the rights of women, but also

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[64] Patti Smith, *Just Kids* (NY: Ecco, 2010), 17.
[65] Ibid, 23.
[66] Ibid.

became more interested in human rights for all, aligning with Smith labeling herself as a humanist rather than a feminist. The idea that all human beings be treated equally is a part of feminism though, proving that the public image of Patti Smith can be seen as feminist when looking through my particular lens.

Yvonne Rainer and the Power of "No"

Yvonne Rainer is different from Patti Smith in that fact that she is a self-proclaimed feminist. Born in 1934 in the San Francisco valley, Rainer states that she grew up with parents, whom she describes as radicals, in her memoir, *Feelings are Facts*. Leaving California for New York City at the age of twenty-two, Rainer reflects on the move as a moment of liberation for her saying that, "Throughout this transitional period the honeyed, heavy, success-and-ambition-and-fantasy-laden atmosphere of the New York art and theater worlds was everything I might have envisioned had I dared to do so in San Francisco."[67]

The statement of living a life that she previously had not dared to live signifies that Rainer began to choreograph her identity as a feminist during her time in New York. It was during the 1950s, and Rainer was living in New York City as an artist, a very unconventional life for females during this time, as also evidenced above in my discussion of Patti Smith. As her time in New York continued, Rainer eventually became one of the founders of the Judson Dance Theater, which sought to revolutionize modern dance at the time.

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[67] Yvonne Rainer, *Feelings are Facts* (MIT Press: Cambridge, 2006), 163.

The Judson Dance Theater changed the status quo, with a mission to democratize the culture of dance. Equality was part of the program, with dancers and non-dancers being used equally, emphasis on pedestrian movement being used in performances, as well as equality among the men and women participants. Equality among sexes was something that stayed on Rainer's mind as she continued to grow as an artist and as a scholar. Through works like *The Mind is a Muscle*, one can see how Rainer began creatively focusing on the bodies of the dancers and how these bodies could be the subject of interest without objectification. Thinking about the female body and how it is portrayed, specifically when compared to a male body showcases a feminist mind that is focused on the equality of all members of humanity. Rainer's research grew into what is known today as the "No Manifesto."[68]

The famous "No Manifesto" is Rainer's attempt to revolutionize dance with the beginning stating, "No to spectacle, No to virtuosity," as a way to counteract the traditional footing of modern dance at the time.[69] Rainer saw a need for change in the culture of dance, and like her feminist and modern dance contemporaries and predecessors, voiced her opinion about changing the status quo. Her writing served as a tool to end the objectification of the body, creating a new style for dance, while simultaneously influencing the culture surrounding it. Rainer's writing also served as a way to question the male gaze and discuss the

[68] Yvonne Rainer. "No Manifesto" in *Dance*. (1st. ed. London Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery MIT Press, 2012), 7.
[69] Ibid.

importance of her art. Through her writing, she was able to share her experiences as a female and the relationship that she had to the art she created.

With her research, Rainer made sure that it was her own voice being heard in her writing, and her physical experience exercising her theories about performance and dance. Arguing for change against the status quo allowed for the topic of inequality to be brought up more prominently in her work and culture surrounding her. Rainer's feminism influenced art viewers like myself, to be more cognizant of the politics at play when it came to performance.

Isadora Duncan, Zelda Fitzgerald, Patti Smith and Yvonne Rainer each performed and choreographed their public images in a different way, showcasing that feminism is not comprised of as a one-size-fits-all system of belief. Each of these women led public lives that can be studied to better understand what feminism looked like in their time, colored by the context of their lives, from the perspective of a 21st century feminist. Furthermore, an examination of their lives leads to better understanding of the feminism of today. Problems of objectification and societal expectations are still abundant in today's society, and the narratives of these four women acts as a way to study how far, and also how little, we have come in our fight for equality between all.

Chapter Four

Remember that date that I wrote about way back in Chapter One? The one where that guy, Joe, told me some lame-ass joke asking how many feminists it takes to change a light bulb? The one that ended with, "Does it matter? Feminists never change things anyway?" The one that made me question all the big things, like whether I could grow to like cats, or whether the psychic was right when I asked about future relationships, and after a lot of brow-furrowing, she said she saw *absolutely nothing at all*... Well, Joe called me again somewhat recently and asked to go out on a second date. I know, pretty surprising.

It's not that I am a pathetic human being. I swear that I let the call go to voicemail, and I even thought about it long and hard. I didn't like Joe; I knew that, but I was curious. The first date resulted in such a surge of creative energy that I was able to present a paper at a conference in Vermont. I thought that the second date had the potential to bring even bigger things if I just let him ramble for a bit, and honestly- I had a thesis to write.

When I told one of my professors that I was going to go on a second date and use it as an opportunity to research my thesis topic of feminism, he quickly laughed and told me that I was, "the living embodiment of the feminist agenda," which got me thinking about my own performance of a feminist identity, and *not* just using the date as a way to begin my writing process. I had spent so much time discussing other people's performances, analyzing the choreography of their everyday life alongside the context of their time, but hadn't really done so

with myself. (The date was fine by the way, but very quickly after it Joe and I stopped talking about the prospect of date number three.)

How could my current performance of identity be read as feminist using a contemporary lens, similar to the work that I did with Isadora Duncan, Zelda Fitzgerald, Patti Smith, and Yvonne Rainer? When discussing these four individual women, I have inserted historical information that could provide context for their lives during the first and second waves of feminism, respectively. When it came to my own identity, I needed to continue my research of the context of feminism past the first and second waves, and push into the third waves, and the schools of thought that arose from it, to question whether we are currently riding a fourth wave, or if feminism has moved beyond a way of thinking that breaks itself down into temporal groups.

Third Wave of Feminism

Jessica Valenti wrote in *Full Frontal Feminism* that when it came to the third wave of feminism, there were some pretty wretched stereotypes, stating that, "We're supposedly the flighty, unserious feminists. 'Cause we like makeup and heels and talk about pop culture. Silliness."[70] But feminism had entered pop culture, and still continues to do so today. If one looks around, they can see it in various examples. For instance, Beyoncé, with her 2013 self-titled album, has an entire song devoted to the subject of feminism titled "Flawless." The track features excerpts of a speech by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, which spoke to the

[70] Jessica Valenti, *Full Frontal Feminism: A Young Women's Guide to Why Feminism Matters* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2007), 172.

needs of equality between boys and girls, and even gave a definition of the word "feminist," in the song.[71] If Beyoncé is able to discuss feminism (and why not?), then feminists should be able to discuss pop culture without the eye roll of the patriarchy, or other folks who believe the real pronunciation of the word "feminist" is "femi-nazi".[72]

In addition to the intersection between feminist theories and pop culture studies, various strands have formed in and around feminist theories, including queer theory. A relationship between the two can be thought of around gender, sexuality, power, marginalized populations and interest in the post-structuralist ideas, but as feminism has given way to new schools of thought over time, it has changed in and of itself as well. With those changes, feminist scholars such as Jennifer Baumgardner have begun to question whether we have entered a fourth wave of feminism.[73]

If there is currently a new breadth of feminism that we are experiencing called the fourth wave, then the impetus for such an event was social media. In *The Guardian* titled, "The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Meet the Rebel Women," writer Kira Cochran discussed this new wave, and its ramifications for feminism, stating that, "What's happening now feels like something new again. It's defined

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[71] "Feminist- a person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes." – Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, "We Should All Be Feminists." The discussion was held at a TEDx Euston event in the spring of 2013, where the theme was "Inspiring Ideas about Africa."

[72] A term popularized by conservative talk-show host Rush Limbaugh to negatively discuss an "extreme feminist"

[73] Jennifer Baumgardner is the writer of *F'em: Goo Goo, Gaga, and Some Thoughts on Balls*. Baumgardner is a writer and activist who focuses on gender, sexuality and women's power.

by technology: tools that are allowing women to build a strong, popular, reactive movement online."[74]

Fourth Wave of Feminism

Online. Twitter. One hundred and forty characters of pure love. Or pure hate. Honestly, it could really go either way. Twitter has changed the landscape of the way that people communicate with one another in today's society, with its ability to connect people instantaneously and without the need for a "middle man." What I think is so amazing about Twitter, and perhaps the reason people have held on so tightly to it is due to the offering of a directness that can be felt in both small social groups, and large social movements, while also offering the capability to be seen as a tool for criticism or commentary by the everyday person.[75] People do not feel as though they no longer have an outlet with which they can share their voice with the public masses. All who have access to a computer or a smartphone can participate, which allows for a large audience, and when participation is encouraged and accessible through the forum, people feel as though they can speak their minds and share their opinions on activities going on in our world. Those activities range from the seriousness of pop musician Justin Bieber and his unwillingness to stop throwing eggs at peoples houses, to the more light-hearted, fun side of things like activism in the feminist

[74] Kira Cochrane, "The Fourth Wave of Feminism: Meet the Rebel Women." *The Guardian*. (Guardian News and Media, 11 Dec. 2013. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.)
[75] Adam Kirsch & Anna Holmes, "How Has Twitter Changed the Role of the Literary Critic?". *The New York Times*. (2013, November 2). Retrieved May 22, 2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/03/books/review/how-has-twitter-changed-the-role-of-the-literary-critic.html?_r=0

community. Or is it the other way around? Either way, feminist writers like Mariame Kaba, Andrea Smith, Lori Adelman and Roxane Gay feel that the exclusion that women of color, or of a sexual orientation that differs from the hetero-normative of our society can perhaps be lessened with social media sites, such as Twitter by commenting that:

> What has changed through the development of social media is the immediacy of the pushback and its more democratic nature. Social media offers the opportunity to expand our platforms to discuss ideas that can encompass thousands of individuals rather than the small and sometimes insular groups of people with whom we work.[76]

They also eventually go on to say that, "Women of color, queer women, working class women, transgender women are all finding ways to insert ourselves into the feminist conversation, and more importantly, direct feminist conversations toward the issues that are most critical to our communities."[77] This is important. Often a complaint that I will hear about feminism, and one that I mentioned in Chapter Two, is that it is not inclusive enough- that feminism is for white, middle-class girls only. Through new innovations in technology, feminism can spread and be seen as accessible, where it may not have been before.

Now this is certainly not to say that social media allows for perfect peace (ever hear of the popular Twitter hashtag, "#Ineedmasculanismbecause"?).[78] There are still too many examples of people feeling distant from the movement, or instances of two people, both claiming to be feminists fighting over what that

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[76] Mariame Kaba, Andrea Smith, Lori Adelman, and Roxane Gay, "Where Twitter and Feminism Meet." *The Nation*. The Nation, 17 Apr. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.
[77] Ibid.
[78] A popular hashtag that trended on Twitter, where men tweeted about how society was struggling due to the rise of feminism, and the need for masculine men in our culture.

word actually means. What Twitter has done though, is allow for a conversation about feminism in general to be seen on a worldwide platform, and engage in dialogue with a worldwide audience of people wanting to be heard. This phenomenon has resulted in a newfound energy and level of popularity. While I would argue that the word gaining popularity is a good thing due to the exposure of the message, others feel that the message itself is being misinterpreted and mis-marketed, as I will discuss later. As a result, one could ask themselves- if the term is being used incorrectly, what have we really gained other than a new level of phony feminism?

Take it away, Jessica Valenti! "The surge in popularity is exciting, and the mainstream acceptance of feminist values means broader influence, but it also ensures that the movement's message is vulnerable to dilution and misuse."[79] One step forward, two steps back. Perhaps this is a situation where one would have to accept that with the gaining of power, a term might be manipulated to best serve others in a way that is incorrect. An awareness of this situation though is imperative in order to keep the original intent of the word, as equality between sexes, intact.

Valenti argues that the fourth wave of feminism has fallen victim to a branding that has resulted in a lot of people claiming the identity of a feminist, without really understanding the history or power of the word. Writer and Twitter enthusiast Caitlin Moran asks this question in her book, *How To Be a*

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[79] Jessica Valenti, "The Empowerment Elite Claims Feminism | The Nation." *The Empowerment Elite Claims Feminism | The Nation*. (The Nation, 3 Mar. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.)

Woman by inquiring, "A. Do you have a vagina? And B. Do you want to be in charge of it? If you said, 'yes' to both, then congratulations! You're a feminist."[80] Now, is this hilarious? Yes, of course, and I'm aware that Moran is just making a joke, but let's look at it seriously for a minute. Is this accurate? Reproductive rights are an important and integral part of the feminist platform, but Moran's definition does not speak to things like equal pay for equal work, educational rights of women around the world or other various issues that are *just* as important, and *just* as integral.

Watering down feminism to a simple question, or a simple statement that does not speak to the necessary politics is what can be called, "Feminism without the fight."[81] Me? I prefer to call it, "Katy Perry Feminism." Why Katy Perry Feminism? Because the American pop-star Katy Perry calls herself a feminist by giving a definition of the word that seems misguided, according to Stephanie Marcus, reported for *The Huffington Post*.[82] This is related to the earlier posed question of whether the increased popularity of the term feminist is positive, if the term is being used in a way that is not entirely correct.

In an interview with Australian TV show "I Wake Up With Today" Perry expressed her views on the F-word stating that, "I used to not really understand what that word meant, and now that I do, it just means that I love myself as a

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[80] Caitlin Moran, *How to Be a Woman*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2012), 75.
[81] Jessica Valenti, "The Empowerment Elite Claims Feminism | The Nation." *The Empowerment Elite Claims Feminism | The Nation*. The Nation, 3 Mar. 2014. Web. 30 Apr. 2014.
[82] Stephanie Marcus, "Katy Perry Is Still Confused By Feminism, Despite Her Best Efforts." *The Huffington Post*. (TheHuffingtonPost.com, 17 Mar. 2014. Web. 03 May 2014.)

female, and also that I love men."[83] Now, I certainly don't want to rip on Katy Perry; her songs often act as the foundation for my running playlist... but c'mon, KP! Feminism can bring on self-love, but feminism is not a synonym for self-love. You can love yourself, and be a real dick to everyone around you... it doesn't make you a feminist!

So there you have it. Whether you "like it" on Facebook, unfollow or retweet it on Twitter, social media has influenced a shift when it comes to feminism and our relationship to it. Social media has proven itself to do more good than bad when it comes to getting the message of feminism out to the masses, and creating a democratic environment that gives equal weight to everybody's characters and voices.

I continue to be curious about the act of writing (or tweeting) and the influence that it can have on a person's identity. When it came to Duncan, Fitzgerald, Smith and Rainer, I studied their public lives, but also what they wrote in autobiographies, letters or short stories. The act of writing is complimentary to the embodied experience, but also different. Writing, for me at least, takes time, requires a lot of thought and typically isn't shared unless I've read through everything a few times and revised, with novelist Robin Sloan stating that, "Twitter has probably caused more people to spend more time choosing their words carefully than any other force in the last five years."[84]

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Adam Kirsch & Anna Holmes, "How Has Twitter Changed the Role of the Literary Critic?". *The New York Times.* (2013, November 2). Retrieved May 22,

Writing is part of my personality, but one that is a bit more planned, rehearsed, even knowingly performed. I am aware of my audience, I am aware of the identity I am creating with my words. It is me, but one step back. Just like this thesis is me, but with a lot less cursing.

Writing Identity and "In the Margins"

Writing and the power of creating an identity through words, and eventually embodiment, was something that I experienced first hand when I was working on my creative thesis, titled "In the Margins,"[85] a twelve-minute modern dance that was performed in the fall of 2013, and continued with a solo performance titled "Beauty No.2," in the spring of 2014. I started my creative thesis project the previous summer. I was most interested in exploring stereotypes and/or standards of femininity in the 1960s, particularly because I felt that it was a time when women in society were experiencing a lot of changes. I used popular music from the decade, as well as costumes that suggested that world. There were five women in the piece, and I worked to make each of them

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2014, from http://www.nytimes.com/2013/11/03/books/review/how-has-twitter-changed-the-role-of-the-literary-critic.html?_r=0

[85] "In The Margins" was performed in the Rose L. Strasser Studio at The College of Brockport in Brockport, New York. Performers included Emily Copeland, Jen Dayton, Rachel Keene, Baylee Simpson and Lauren St. Louis. Costumes were designed by Emma Scholl with lighting by Benoit Beauchamp. Music included "Mama Said" by The Shirelles, "Sunshine, Lollipops and Rainbows" and "You Don't Own Me" both performed by Dusty Springfield and "Happy Days are Here Again" by Barbara Streisand. The investigation of the piece was then continued into the spring with a solo titled, "Beauty No. 2" performed by Rachel Thome. Chelsea Spraker designed costumes, and Benoit Beauchamp completed the lighting design. The music selected was titled, "Lovefool" and was performed by The Cardigans.

be seen as individual women with separate identities, rather than clumping them together as a singular woman with a singular story.

My dancers were extremely skillful in their execution of the movement, and while I tried to develop their feelings of ownership over the work, with much of our process being collaborative, I could not quite get them to truly embody or perform the piece in a way that read to the audience. Throughout our rehearsals we had looked at pictures of Isadora Duncan in her sweeping dresses, read the words of Zelda Fitzgerald, listened to the music of Patti Smith and discussed the work of Yvonne Rainer. None of these kinds of research resulted in the kind of embodiment I was looking for. The dancers were not connecting to the work, and not for a lack of effort, but just an overall lack of connection to the idea.

My mentor suggested that I begin my next rehearsal with a writing exercise where each dancer would write for as long as they needed about who they felt their character was in the piece, essentially writing an identity that then could be performed through choreographic movement. The papers would not be for me to read, I just asked that they write about who they thought they were in the piece and how they each related to the other dancers on stage. At first, it seemed everyone was a little hesitant, which I got- creating an identity on a whim can seem a bit daunting, but all of the dancers took time, and truly seemed to be thoughtfully engaging in the task. Some jumped right in; others sat for a while before picking up the pen and permanently printing their characters on to the page. What I thought would be a ten-minute task ended up taking closer to

an hour. I let them all know that we could discuss the exercise together if they wanted, but they instead asked to jump right in and perform the piece as a group.

The transition of identity that occurred from the task of writing to the task of embodying movement was remarkable to watch. The movement took on a new meaning as the performers connected to the choreography with a sense of understanding and presence. Each dancer became even more of a vibrant individual in the piece, fully diving in to her unique personality. In addition to the individuals I bean to see on stage, I also got the sense of a community. The piece began to feel more cohesive when they moved in sync with one another. They were able to relate to each other in the grand scheme of the project and the dance benefited from the exercise that bonded the performers together, even though they had not shared what they written. The act of writing became a way to plan a performance that could be felt by each of them, greatly enhancing the piece.

Conclusion

Further points of possible exploration and research are of interest to me as I complete my writing. I am curious about the act of embodying an identity, and also the physical act of writing down ones story and whether that would be considered choreography. A physical act that generates meaning reads to me as choreography, but I am interested to hear and read the opinions of other spectators in the art world. I want to grow in my familiarity with present day art

makers, who either are or are not labeled, by critics, audience members or themselves, as feminist. I'd like to dig deeper into the relationship that feminism has to different genders, and how identity plays a role in that relationship, but mostly I'm just wondering when Jessica Valenti's new book is coming out. Anyone?

My thesis doesn't feel like an answer to all of my questions, but a springboard for new ones. Perhaps by the time my next paper is written, Twitter will be outdated and Patti Smith will admit to being a feminist. Or not. We'll have to wait and see.

Either way, my research proves the relationship between dance studies and feminist theories has continually been a complicated one, partially due to the way that dance studies and feminist theories have changed within the context of their times. Dance isn't the exact same art form that it was years ago when Isadora Duncan was performing, and feminism isn't viewed exactly the same way it was when Zelda Fitzgerald was living her life. My own relationship to dance and feminism may shift as well. As I deepen my studies on dance and dance theory, and I continue my experiences as a woman curious about my position and the position of other women in this world, my opinions, values and thoughts will shift- not for better or worse, but shift nonetheless. I am a product of art, feminism and the context of the time in which I am living, similar to Isadora Duncan, Zelda Fitzgerald, Patti Smith and Yvonne Rainer. In the end, I may not have the best comeback to, "How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?" but I do have an understanding of my identity, and how that can be

shared through the choreography of my own public performance. So, yeah... I win.